

# Hillandale

## News

No 210 JUNE 1996



# MECHANICAL MUSIC

Tuesday 30th July 1996



*A G&T. Oak Gramophone pedestal sold recently at auction for £2500.*

Phillips hold regular sales of Mechanical Music and related items throughout the year. Entries are currently being accepted for inclusion in our sales throughout 1995.

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# Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society Limited, Co. Reg. No. 3124250

**Founded in 1919**

**Patrons:** Oliver Berliner and Kathleen Darby



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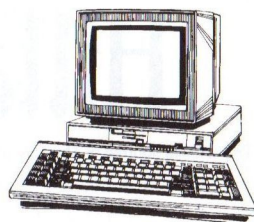
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**Front cover illustration:** Giuseppe Creatore.  
See Frederick Williams' article on page 46.

## EDITOR'S DESK



### Accessories

With this issue we start a new occasional series of articles on accessories. The first one, called *You Are An Accessory*, is by Dave Cooper. This has been a side of our hobby that we have rather neglected in *Hillandale News* in recent years. Accessories cover such a wide field that I am sure many of us are unaware of the existence of quite a number of them; so I hope Dave Cooper's article will stimulate more readers to write articles about accessories in their collections.

### Cordex Binders

When the size of *Hillandale News* was increased to 40 pages with issue No.200 of October 1994 we did not anticipate that the new size would pose problems with fitting 12 issues of the journal into the current Cordex Binders. However I am pleased to announce that George Woolford has arranged with the supplier of the Cordex Binders to provide us with a binder with a widened spine to accommodate 12 issues of the 40-page magazine. He has ordered a supply of these and they will be in stock soon. We have not yet been advised of the price. However we should be able to give the details of the new price in the next issue of *Hillandale News*.

### Midlands Group and Northern Group

**A joint meeting of the two groups** will be held on **Sunday 30th June 1996** in the Newhampton Inn, Riches Street, Whitmore Reans, Wolverhampton at **2.30pm**. The Newhampton Inn is a CAMRA recommended 'real ale' pub. There will be two recitals. Phil Bennett will give a programme called *Rare Jazz on Record* and Gordon Bitting will present a programme called *Tenors of the Century*. The programmes will feature rare jazz and operatic recordings on both disc and cylinder. A selection of machines will also be on display. All will be welcome and I urge as many readers as possible to support this event. Anyone requiring further details can contact **Phil Bennett on** [REDACTED]

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**.

Hence the deadline for the **August 1996** issue will be **15th June 1996**.

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.



# THE COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE COIN SLOT MODEL AS

by Mike Field

The Columbia Graphophone Type AS first appeared in 1898 and was basically a coin-operated Type A (later AT). It used a similar motor with additional parts and the same top works with modifications.

The basic principle of the early coin-operated machines was to prevent the motor being wound unless a coin was inserted. Figs. 2 and 3 show views of the underside of the coin chute and winding mechanism. Arm **A** consists of a strip of steel with a fork fashioned at the coin chute end and shaped like a pawl to engage ratchet **B** at the other. The weight on the ratchet side of the pivot is greater than the weight on the fork side ensuring that the arm will always drop onto the ratchet under gravity thereby preventing the spring being wound. In this initial state the fork is in the up position. When a coin is dropped, the extra weight of the coin overcomes the asymmetrical weight distribution of the arm to move the forked end downwards and so release the ratchet. At this stage the forked arm does not move down fully, which ensures that the coin is held and the ratchet kept in a disengaged position during the winding.

The operator can now wind up the motor. As winding proceeds, the peg **C** on the wheel on the spring arbor engages the star wheel **D** and moves it one leaf per revolution. When the peg engages the solid part of the star wheel, the motor cannot be wound further. The winding handle is made such that excess pressure will cause it to slip thereby preventing damage to the mechanism.

This process will get the motor fully wound

but there are other operations to carry out. This is where the extra gear wheel **E** comes into play. This wheel, supported in the casting, is driven by a pinion fixed to the spring arbor shaft, and incorporates a peg **F**.

As winding begins, the wheel rotates until the peg contacts the tail of an arm attached to the right-hand side of the lift bar **H** which is free to rotate around the front sleeve on which the reproducer carriage **L** slides. Unfortunately this "tail" cannot be seen in the photograph. It is part of the extreme right support of the lift bar and passes through the top works and the mounting plate so that its end will contact peg **F**. There is a projection **M** at the top of the end support which can pass through a cut-out portion of the spring-loaded plunger sleeve **J**. The edge of the projection is in contact with the right-hand edge of the cut-out part of the plunger. (See Fig. 1)

As the wheel rotates, the peg forces the tail to move, rotating the lift bar **H** around the sleeve thus causing the front of the bar move upwards. The bar, which is under the tension of the small coil springs at each end, does two things more or less simultaneously. First it allows the small bent rod **I** to rise which releases the governor and allows the motor to start. Second it pushes the reproducer lift lever upwards which causes the reproducer to contact the cylinder. The position of peg **F** is critical and must release the motor as the machine is fully wound up. Once the edge of the projection **M** at the top of the right-hand side of the lift bar **H** has cleared the edge of the cut-out part of plunger **J**, the action of the

spring in the plunger causes it to move to the left. Since the cut-out part of the plunger is no longer under the projection at the end of the lift lever, rotation is prevented and the lift bar is held in the operating position.

When the motor starts, wheel **E** also rotates and peg **F** will in due course contact a spring-loaded lever **G**. This lever is in contact with arm **A**. As the rotation continues, the lever **G** is depressed tilting the fork end of arm **A** further downwards to release the coin. The machine can once again not be wound up without a new coin.

As the playing of the cylinder nears the end, two things are still required. The motor must be stopped, the reproducer lifted off the cylinder and the reproducer carriage **L** returned to the start position. These actions are triggered off by the spring-loaded plunger **J**. As the carriage moves to the right during playing, the right-hand side will eventually come into contact with the plunger. As the motion continues and the carriage pushes the plunger into its housing, the cut-out portion moves to the right. The lift bar is released from its operating position when the projection at the top end is able to rotate through the cut out in the plunger as it comes fully into position. as the lift bar is

spring-loaded, the front will move downwards pushing the bent rod **I** down to stop the motor and also pulling down the reproducer lever to lift the reproducer off the cylinder.

Not visible in the photograph is a long coiled spring which is attached to the left-hand side of the top works casting and to the left-hand side of the bottom of the reproducer carriage. As the cylinder is played the spring is extended and when the plunger releases the lift mechanism and so disengages the feedscrew, the spring pulls the carriage back to the start position of the adjustable collar **K**.

Although the mechanism is ingeniously simple, the carriage return system is its Achilles heel. If the spring is too weak, the carriage will not return to its start position; if it is too strong the motor will either slow or the feed nut will slip. The need for the exact adjustment of the spring tension, the plunger position and the start position collar must have been an ongoing task. There are no reports on reliability, but the mechanics of the day must have been busy!

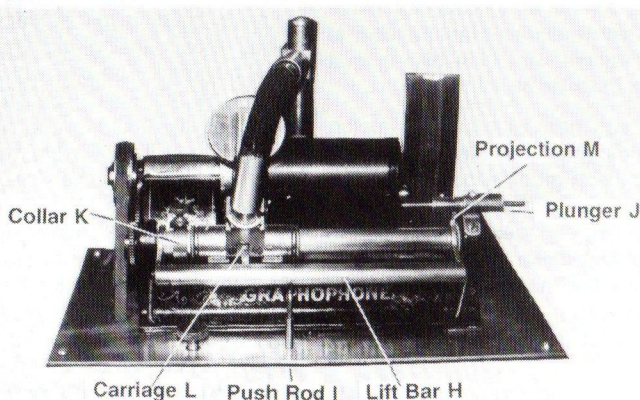


Fig.1



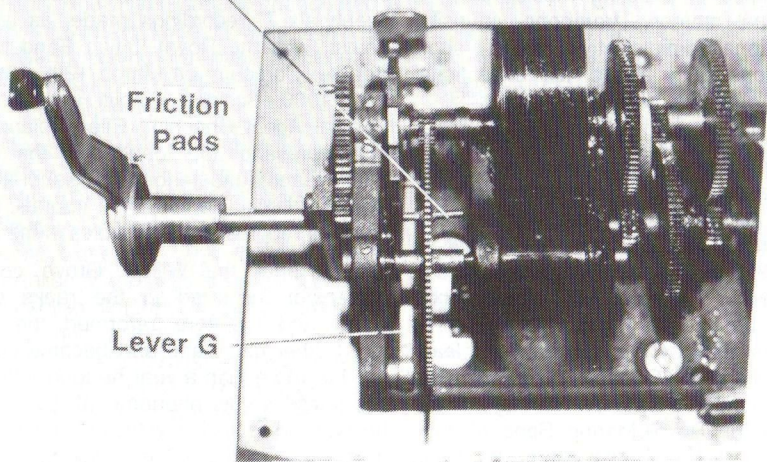
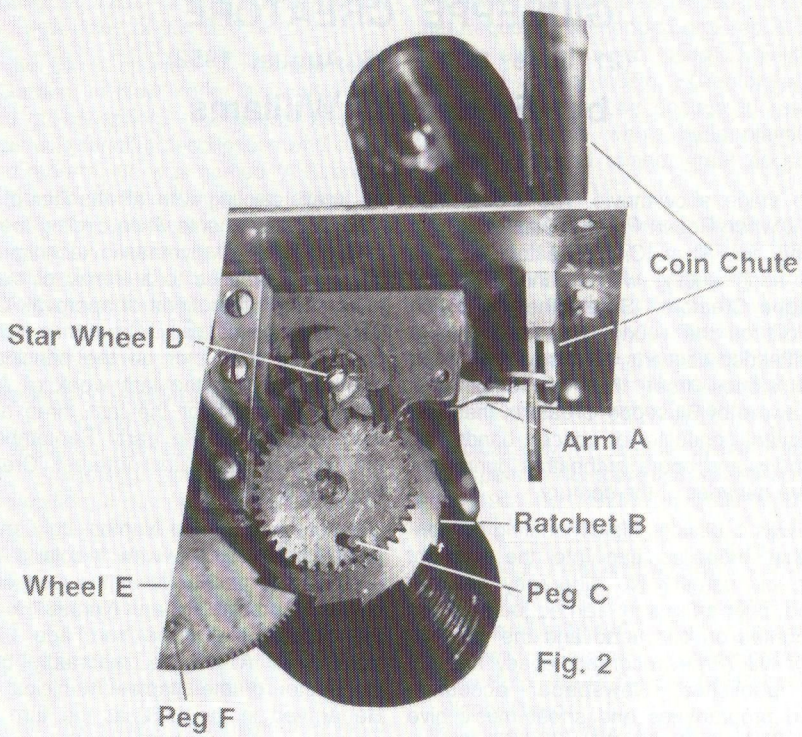


Fig. 3

# GIUSEPPE CREATORE

(21 June 1871 - 15 August 1952)

by Frederick Williams

In the stage show/movie *The Music Man* (1957), when Robert Preston was on a train heading for River City, Preston sang a patter song ending with "...and the great Giuseppe Creatore." Surely the implication was lost on the young. But music lovers who attended concerts, read reviews and/or heard stories from their contemporaries were aware of Giuseppe Creatore, the most flamboyant conductor of concert bands and symphony and opera orchestras during the first five decades of the century.

What was it, besides his conducting histrionics, that propelled him into the limelight during his career? No biography has appeared, brief articles in learned journals can be counted on one hand and the compilation of his 78rpm recorded legacy has not been published. Newspaper accounts, printed programmes and sheet music give us a glimpse of exacting musicianship, a phenomenal memory, trombone virtuosity, organisational/administrative skills, short compositions and, above all, exceptional band and orchestra arrangements.

Through the early years of his career newspaper reports were filled with vivid, fanciful accounts of Creatore's activities directing his Band. From the first concerts he conducted at Willow Grove Park in August 1900 as the assistant conductor and substitute for Georgio Minoliti who had suddenly become ill, the public and press were astonished by the melodramatic leadership actions of Creatore. His animated style with contortions, leaps, darting into the middle of the Royal Marine Band of Italy, flailing arms, jerky head motions displaying waves of cascading raven hair, pleading as

he knelt, cajoling with all manner of finger and arm movements while circling the baton and all kinds of gymnastic techniques excited the audience to a frenzy of clapping, bravos and other signs of approval. Crowds increased dramatically. Creatore's name appeared as conductor on the principal programmes during the last week of August. Minoliti returned for the last three days of their engagement in early September and the aroused public lost interest. Creatore's future was assured.

Creatore was born in Naples, Italy and as a young man studied with Nicola d'Arienzo and Camillo de Nardis at the Conservatory of San Pietro a Majella in Naples. He toured the capitals of Europe from age 14 as a trombonist. At 17 he reportedly became Conductor of the Naples Municipal Band. He arrived in the U.S. at the turn of the century and recent information points to twenty-six 7" recordings made, as a trombonist, with the Royal Italian Band for the Berliner Company on March 12th, 13th and 14th 1900. Besides Minoliti and Creatore, Special Agent Channing Ellery (piano-playing impresario and founder of the famed Ellery Band) and tenor and General Manager Ferruccio Giannini (first operatic singer to make records) were notables in the Band.

Shortly after the Willow Grove concerts dissension occurred in the ranks of the Band and Creatore reformed the Band, hired other musicians and became conductor. For more than a year he toured the U.S. His success was phenomenal. Despite this he was not satisfied with the quality of his musicians. In November 1901 he returned to Naples, recruited better performers and in



the spring of 1902 returned to New York with his new Band of 60 men.

The new Band opened at Hammerstein's Roof Garden, in New York City, where they created a sensation. The press became delirious with fanciful descriptions and exaggerated reports. He was named "A Svengali to His Band". Women danced on tables in a hypnotic frenzy and Createore was described variously as overemotional, wildly imaginative and an uninhibited Italian Maestro. *The New York Journal* devoted space to some doggerel written by G. Schlotterbeck, which wound up as follows:

"Blessings on you Createore; if we all  
could work like that  
We would not get results that seem  
trifling, tame and flat.  
If we could but hurl ourselves at what is  
given us to do  
And keep that whirlwind up until we get  
completely through,  
We'd make a noise perhaps ourselves  
to echo through the land  
And get as much good out of life as you  
do from that band."

During the five-month engagement at Hammerstein's Roof Park Createore negotiated a long term contract with Howard Pew and Frank Gerth, well-known band managers of New York City. Createore and His Band began a nation-wide tour.

Not all reports were devoted entirely to the conducting spectacle. Excerpts from the Newport (Rhode Island) *Daily News*, Wednesday December 13th 1902 included "Createore Conquers. The Concert by the Great Italian Band was an artistic success from start to finish. ... The program was excellent and splendidly rendered. ... 47 musicians ... extreme staccato legato true to the name, rapid runs ... done right and so easily, fortissimo ... was sustained almost

incredibly..., music was played to a house that frequently demanded encores. Createore had an elegant music stand ... guiltless of holding a note of music..., Createore was not in any one spot long enough to read any note ... and the whole band played with marked light and shade, great accent and absolute precision."

A year later the *Toledo Blade* reported: "While he (Createore) has neither the delicacy of Sousa nor the dignity of Winterbottom (U. S. Marines Band) he surpasses both of them not only in the strength of his crescendos and the overwhelming might of his climaxes, but in his eloquent and vivid expressions of the varied emotions."

A typical day at Willow Grove Park (the Band performed there for seven summers from 1901 to 1925) on June 2nd 1903 included four concerts:

#### Afternoon Programme. Part I, 3 o'clock

March, <i>Up the Street</i>	Morse
Overture, <i>Barber of Seville</i>	Rossini
Intermezzo, <i>Salome</i>	Loraine
Oboe Solo <i>The Bohemian Girl</i>	Balfe
Signor Raho	
Selection from <i>The Serenade</i>	Herbert

#### Afternoon Programme. Part II, 4:30

March, <i>The Buffaloes</i>	Engelmann
Selection, <i>Florodora</i>	Stuart
Cornetto Solo <i>Non è Ver</i>	Mattei
Signor Lucci	Grand
Selection from <i>Boccaccio</i>	Suppe

#### Evening Programme. Part I, 8 o'clock

March, <i>El Capitan</i>	Sousa
Overture, <i>Nabucco</i>	Verdi
Intermezzo, <i>Pas de Fleurs</i>	Delibes
Terzetta from <i>Attila</i>	Verdi
Solos by Signor Lucci, Croce and Iafisco	
<i>Ride of the Walküre</i>	Wagner

#### Evening Programme. Part II, 9:30

### *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

	Mendelssohn
Polka, <i>Mezzanotte</i>	Waldteufel
Flicorno Solo, <i>Alice, Where Art Thou?</i>	Ascher
Ballet Music, <i>Excelsior</i>	Marenco

Frequently-performed Creatore marches included *Columbus*, *Army and Navy*, *Royal Purple*, *Electric* and *The Leader*. While it is believed that all of the opera excerpts and other orchestral works were transcribed and arranged by Creatore, programs of the early years did not credit Creatore for his work.

Touring in the U. S. and Canada with great acclaim continued until early 1906. From January to April the Band toured England and Scotland with the same success. On April 29th the band began another successful U. S. tour with a concert in Springfield, Massachusetts.

With the intensification of the dance craze during the latter part of the first decade the function of the concert band as a medium for dancing began to slow down. The concert/military band had to be of superior quality for the public to accept. Imitators of Creatore's Band began to find bookings to be falling off. Included in the tours from 1910-1916 was the Chataqua Circuit. The Band still had plenty of work and the press continued to publicise a slightly more subdued Maestro.

On December 6th and December 11th 1911 the Columbia Phonograph Record Company made 7 12" sides, issuing 6. These were the first to be released to the public. A previous effort on January 6th 1906 by the Victor Talking Machine Company, in Camden, New Jersey, resulted in none of the 4 sides being released.

While giving a series of concerts at the Olentangy Park Theatre in Columbus, Ohio Creatore was asked by an interviewer from the *Columbus Journal* if it was possible for him to carry in his mind the scores of all the

hundreds of selections played by the band. His explanation, printed in the *Columbus Journal* of May 24th 1914 was that he was able to concentrate, to an unusual extent. Madame Creatore stated that when her husband was rehearsing or leading his band he was totally unconscious of anything which was going on except just the music, and the results he desired to obtain from his musicians.

Creatore explained his method of walking about, while conducting, as being the one he found best to get the best results from his band. "If I stand coldly in one place," he said, "How can I make them feel it at all, as they do when I go to them, my band members?"

From 1902 to 1916, wherever the Band performed, Creatore continually attracted the attention of the press with announcements, interviews, reviews, pictures, photos and drawings based on his theatricality, musicianship, personal life, musical associates and associations and his seemingly inexhaustible energy.

Beginning on February 17th and 18th 1916 Creatore interrupted his eastern states tour to record Edison Diamond Discs, from which cylinders were dubbed. Five more sessions followed that year.

A major shift occurred in November 1916 when Creatore formed the Carmen Opera Company. Following this success the Creatore Grand Opera Company was established in the succeeding year and in 1918 a twenty-week opera tour opened in Allentown, Pennsylvania and included Philadelphia, Chicago, Montreal, Quebec, Cleveland, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Buffalo, Toledo, Toronto and Detroit. The Company repertoire included *Rigoletto*, *Barber of Seville*, *Carmen*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Il Trovatore*, *La Traviata*, *Martha*, *Faust*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Gioconda* and *Aida*. Among the many artists who sang with the Company were Riccardo Martin,



Pasquale Amato, Virginia Darclee, Jeanne Gordon, Serge Zanco and Greek Evans, with Production Director Alfredo Salmaggi.

From 1916 into the depression years Createore juggled his activities, alternately touring and giving concerts in metropolitan New York locations virtually the year round. The opera presentations were given in the fall and winter and the concert band was scheduled during the spring and summer.

The Createore Band visited the Edison Company on seven occasions in 1918 to continue their recording activities. A total of twenty six Diamond Discs and sixteen cylinders entered the market.

Favourable reports continued about both the Opera Company and Band and in 1920 a Chicago newspaper headlined "28,000 Hear Opera Sung at Soldiers Field."

In the same year the Band recorded 16 10" sides for the Paramount label of the New York Recording Laboratories of Port Washington, Wisconsin. Subsequently these sixteen sides appeared on a variety of labels, a result of selling or leasing the masters.

Band concerts were featured at, among other places, Willow Grove Park during the summers of 1919, 1920 and 1925. During the June 28th to July 18th 1925 engagement Harold D. Smith, Victor Company representative, negotiated a contract with Createore to make a series of electrical recordings which were to be done in the Trinity Church Studio in Camden. From 1925 to 1931 a total of fourteen 10" discs were issued, of which two were in the 'regular' popular music series (19,000) and twelve in the 'ethnic' series (70,000). The famous 'classical' or 'operatic excerpts or overtures' series (35,000) consisted of twenty-six 12" discs, of which four were issued in duplicate in automatic sequence. Seven other 12" discs included symphonic marches (6 sides), a waltz, a Spanish caprice, socialist marches (2 sides), hymns

(2 sides) and overtures (2 sides).

It is these recordings which give us the legacy of his art. Called by Harold D. Smith and others 'the Toscanini of the Band' Createore left us these sonically wonderful 78s. More than anything else that survives of his works these recordings represent the spirit of the man. We are fortunate to have had the then major recording company in need of an excellent band to promote its new electrical process.

From 1919 to 1944 Createore busied himself with radio shows on NBC-WJZ; park concerts on The Mall in Central Park and at Prospect Park in Brooklyn; annual trips to the Exhibition Grounds in Toronto, Canada; guest appearances with the Allentown Band in Allentown, Pennsylvania and at Madison Square Garden. In 1936 he became Bandmaster of the New York Symphonic State Band, a WPA Federal Music Project. His last recording, a 16" radio service transcription with this band, was issued for radio station use in 1936. A leaflet announcement of Createore opening his *School for Band and Orchestra* was distributed in November 1936.

Allentown Band member Henry Crespi remembered Createore as "the most energetic and strictest conductor we ever encountered". He added "...the demanding, but worthwhile, work of preparing and presenting Tschaikovsky's *Overture 1812*. Createore perspired heavily from the exhausting work. He had a phenomenal ear."

Createore resigned in a huff as Director of The New York City Symphony Orchestra, one of the WPA organisations, on May 26th 1940. He had been with the project for four years. He created and conducted the Women's Symphonet (1939) and was elected President of the Grand Opera Producers Association.

His last New York City concert was in 1946 and his last public appearance in the New

York City area was as Guest Conductor of the New York State Symphonic Band for a Tri-Boro Pop Concert at Randall's Island Stadium. Three years later he composed the music drama *The Power of Faith*, which he proposed to perform in theatres as a fund-raising project for local organisations for building needs, charity and educational and social uses.

Creatore died of a heart attack at his home in Corona, Queens County, New York. C. L. Bagley wrote under the heading *In Memory of a Great Conductor* in the *Overture* (Los Angeles, September 15th 1952): "no one who ever witnessed Creatore in action would dispute his outstanding personality and leadership. Doubtless he was among the great geniuses of the baton. He had the faculty of compelling good musicians to excel themselves. This is indeed the quality of the born maestro. To him the objective was tone color - volume - the infinitesimal gradations of sound, from pianissimo to the highest fortissimo - impeccable intonation - in short the perfection of the musical picture from every standpoint. He was in these things excellence himself and will long be remembered."

In a taped interview with Luigi Creatore and Alba Carollo, the fifth and sixth children of Giuseppe Creatore, on March 7th 1979, concerning their father's life, the major consideration was his conducting deportment. Luigi related some of the published materials he had read were greatly exaggerated but it was true, from his observations, that his father was highly animated. Luigi and Alba both gave examples of this energy being expended outside Creatore's directing. At home, for example, at the dinner table, when conversation required it, he would become high spirited with all manner of gesticulations to embellish his point. His actions, they stressed, were very much in control. This was his natural state.

Creatore was endowed with boundless en-

ergy. An energy that was exhibited in dramatic actions, certainly calculated to gain audience reaction, but, just as certainly, under control as a genuine manifestation of the 'real' Creatore. Twenty-six years after his death Luigi Creatore and Alba Carollo reminisced over their father's all-encompassing optimism: his arranging activities that dominated the last years of his life, always in preparation for the next concert.

What influence did Creatore have on the American musical scene? When he returned to Italy to recruit members for his new Band in November 1901 he spread the word that there were many opportunities for musicians in the U. S. Consequently a wave of Italian Bands was organised and toured the country between 1902 and World War I. As the fad wore down and business slowed many of these musicians sought jobs that entailed less travel. After World War I, with the growth of symphony orchestras, a number of Creatore's musicians gained positions with major east-coast city orchestras. Creatore inspired performers to create ethnic bands, particularly Catholic Church related, for Holy Day processions and other events, in New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago and many cities and towns in between. This tradition continues to this day and a few old-timers remember Creatore, while even more fondly retell stories about the Maestro passed on to them.

Did Creatore influence a generation or more of conductors? The difficult task of assessing this would be best left to further scholarly research.



# MY THREE PATHÉ CYLINDERS

## by Sven Traunfelder

Some years ago I bought a Pathé phonograph from a private collector. I did not possess any cylinders at that time and I did not know then that there were societies of collectors who met regularly, often at phonofairs. I asked that private collector if he would give me three of his cylinders so that I could play the Pathé phonograph. He gave me three Pathé cylinders. Several years later after purchasing and reading some literature on phonographs I discovered that I had paid over the odds for that Pathé phonograph. I also discovered that it was not original, having been constructed from parts from several other phonographs. I decided to sell it and lost money in the process. I kept the cylinders as they were in excellent condition.

Later, quite accidentally, I heard of a new book about Pathé called *Panorama des Cylindres et premiers disques Pathé, chantés et parlés* (1898-1910) by Gilbert Humbert. As the book did not appear to be available from booksellers I tried to track down the author's address. This proved extremely difficult; however a French colleague pointed me in the right direction and I was able to get hold of Mr Humbert's telephone number. Trying to communicate with him proved a nightmare! He spoke only French to me. After a few minutes I realised that he could hardly speak German. I could speak German and English but no French. I eventually managed to

get Gilbert Humbert to write to me. I eventually got his book from him. To my mind this is the best book published so far on dating cylinders and discs from Pathé. Over 5,000 cylinders and discs are listed with details of performers, orchestras etc. Also given are details of recording dates.

After reading this book I realised that the seller of the non-original phonograph mentioned above had also made a mistake. The three cylinders I got from him are some of the last few cylinders from 1898 and they are in mint condition! Meantime Gilbert and I have become good friends. I translated the preface of his *Panorama des Cylindres et premiers disques Pathé, chantés et parlés* into German and as a result got my name mentioned in his book. I'm still proud of this! By the way, Gilbert has written more books and he has now started on an enlarged edition of his *Panorama des Cylindres et premiers disques Pathé, chantés et parlés*.

This story shows how important it is for us collectors to support each other and share our knowledge and experience with the world at large. I think it also shows the benefit of belonging to an organisation like the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society.

## C.L.P.G.S. BOOKLIST

George Woolford is negotiating to purchase some copies of a reprint of the 1926/27 Polydor Catalogue for the Booklist. Full details will appear in the next issue of *Hillandale News*.

A new updated edition of Eric L. Reiss' book *The Compleat Talking Machine* has just been published. George Woolford has ordered some copies of this book. Full details will be given in the next issue of *Hillandale News*.

If you want the latest details or wish to place an order for these publications please contact:

George Woolford at [REDACTED] Nottingham NG5 4NA.

Tel: [REDACTED]

# PHONOGRAM DUVAL LTD. - THE CYLINDERS

## by John S. Dales

Further to Frank Andrews' article *Phonogram Duval Ltd* in the last issue of *Hillandale News* I would like to give some additional details concerning the cylinders of that company.

The Duval cylinders are described as being made of 'gommonite'. The French 'gomme' is also an alternative word for rubber as a material. These cylinders were manufactured from a black celluloid that is visually similar to any other celluloid used in cylinder production. Celluloid is a synthetic material and may have certain ingredients and properties that are common to rubber.

The physical characteristics of the Duval cylinders are as follows:

Type:	Standard size
Speed:	160rpm
Material:	Black celluloid, styled 'gommonite'.
Core:	Unlined, but having metal support rings at both ends.
Length:	Short, 3½" (9cms)
Identification:	No spoken announcement. Catalogue number and title only, incised after the grooves.

The plus points for these cylinders certainly meet the claims as made by Phonogram Duval Ltd. Being unlined and short in length they are indeed light in weight but, nevertheless, strong and durable. The volume, especially the band pieces, is very loud and can result in blasting with small diameter reproducers. I have not seen one of the Duval 'Champion' reproducers to either assess performance or pass comment. However, these cylinders play well when used

with large diameter Edison reproducers (i.e. Model O type with its cork-backed impregnated paper diaphragm). The only serious minus points, and typical of most celluloid cylinders, is shrinkage. On surviving examples the entire length between the metal support rings is concave. Sometimes this results in the reproducer, especially the floating type, skidding across the grooves. The problem is minimised by again using an Edison, or similar, reproducer having a limit pin.

As Franks Andrews states in his account, the artists remained anonymous as they held recording contracts with other concerns. The fine band recordings were most probably the famous Garde Republicaine.

The Duval boxes have a shallow lid on which the circular lid label includes "Paris - London" with the catalogue number and titles hand-written in pencil. The full body label, coloured in yellowish green and red, must surely rank as one of the most original and beautiful designs ever to grace a cylinder box. A seated lady leans towards a phonograph and looks upon two boys. The boy on the left sobs, and no wonder as he has upturned a table and smashed a case of wax cylinders in the process. The boy on the right happily juggles with Duval cylinders.

The label illustration was obtained by making several photocopies at different points on the circumference. Cutting out the sections and pasting them together was an art in itself! The finished result is a little out of alignment. I hope you will forgive me as vocational stress has left me with shaky hands. I'm getting like Liberace the pianist!



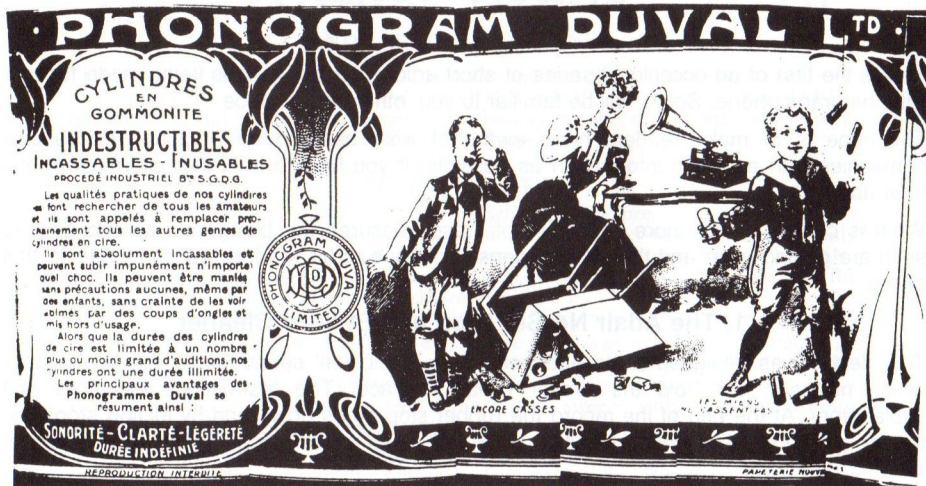


Illustration on Phonogram Duval Ltd.'s cylinder box



Photograph of a Phonogram Duval Ltd. disc.  
(Thanks to Peter Adamson for supplying this)

# YOU ARE AN ACCESSORY!

## by Dave Cooper

This is the first of an occasional series of short articles on the various items made for use with the gramophone. Some, will be familiar to you, others may not be.

The hope is to make readers more aware of what used to be produced by various companies with as much information as possible. If you have any further information let's hear about it!

What is certain is that more and more of these treasures are being sold abroad and as such are getting rarer and therefore expensive. I hope other readers will contribute to this series.

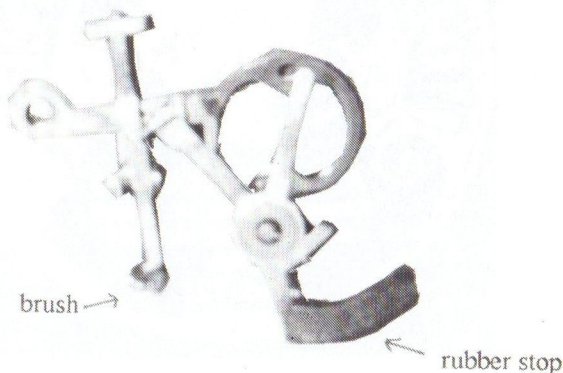
### 1. The Adair No-Set Stop and Record Cleaner

This device was designed to be attached to an 'Exhibition' soundbox by the two screws which normally just hold the rubber collar in place. The instructions leaflet is self explanatory. At the end of the record the rubber stop drops down and by friction stops the turntable. The brush although small, is quite stiff. What a fine mess it would have made of vinyl!

As with gramophones and records of the period circa 1910-20 this device was expensive at £1.0s.0d. I bought mine by post sight-unseen (curiosity got the better of me). It came in a small blue box with no brand name, but looks original enough. As it is not a pretty item, I would understand collectors going for something else, but I like it. Likely current price approximately £25.

Next time: The Ciro Record Repeater.

### The Adair No-Set Stop and Record Cleaner





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## AND RECORD CLEANER.

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The Brush Record Cleaner is the best ever devised. It is especially constructed to go to the bottom of the grooves, cleaning the record both before and after the needle. The record advancing against the bristles obviously must clean it more thoroughly than when the brush laying on top of the record sweeps with it. A clean record means less scratching and clearer sounding music.

Do not use oil or other lubricant as it will "gum" and make the parts stick. From time to time rub the dust off the rubber brake and brush. The very substances of which the brake and brush are made preclude all possibility of injury to the record.

RETAIL PRICE - £1.0.0

Inventor and Patentee:  
Montague Adair, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Manufactured by THE BEVAN MFG. CO., 142 Gooch St., BIRMINGHAM.

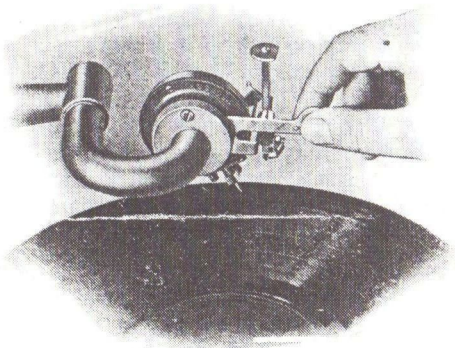


Figure 1.

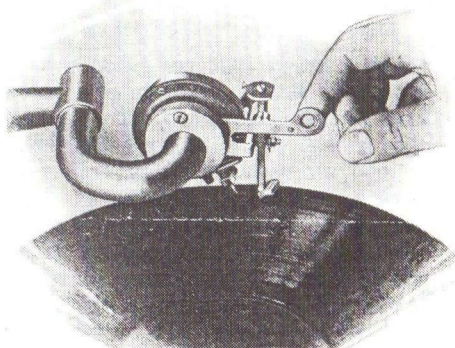


Figure 2.

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# **YOU ARE AN ACCESSORY!**

## **by Dave Cooper**

### **2. The Ciro Record Repeater**

This device was designed to get your gramophone to replay a 10" record. Basically the needle is placed in the slot when playing a record which holds the repeater in place. At the end of the recorded grooves the needle leaves the slot, the repeater is free to spin and the needle joins a groove in it which takes it back to the beginning of the record. The adjusting pointer is used to direct the needle to leave the record on longer or shorter recorded groove areas.

Frankly, it is a bit hit and miss and more miss! I have also pictured 'The Core Record Repeater' which is essentially the same thing only made in metal.

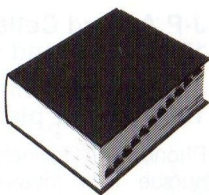
My "Ciro" box has been stamped on the edge RED, so I assume they came in other colours. I am really pleased with this item despite the fact it doesn't work all that well. The box is charming I think.

Likely current price is a tricky one to give. Mine cost just £5 but I understand they have been sold in auctions a few years ago at over the £40 mark.

Next time: The HMV Fibre Needle Cutter



## REVIEWS



### **The Gramophone Company's First Indian Recordings 1899-1908 by Michael Kinnear**

This important book benefits from an author who understands Indian music and who has spent many years of original research actually in India, where he has met numerous elderly relatives of recording artists, shop-owners and record collectors who have enabled him to listen to old records in their collections. The story of The Gramophone Company proper in India begins with John Watson Hawd whose observations to the Company in London caused it to terminate its agencies, open its own stores in Bombay and Calcutta and to despatch Fred Gaisberg and the 19-year old George Dillnutt on the first "recording tour" to the Far East in 1902-3. (That same J. W. Hawd later joined Nicole Records to conduct his own recording expedition for that company, in India.) Even if Gaisberg has been accused, by some, of not recording cultural music, he had recorded some very popular artists of the lighter theatre, due to the recommendations of Amrenda Nath Dutt and Jamshedji Framji Madan, which remained good sellers over a prolonged period, providing a regular income.

William Sinkler Darby and Max Hampe arrived in Calcutta in early December 1904, and, benefitting from Gaisberg's experiences visited many other centres by train, their recordings enhanced by advice from Indian "middlemen". Late March 1905 they left Madras for Colombo and Rangoon from whence they returned to Calcutta to make

Tibetan recordings. Their 12" recordings of Lal Chand Boral, for example, remained in the catalogue until well into the 1920s.

William Gaisberg and George Dillnutt arrived in Calcutta in May 1906, making only 10" and 12" recordings in various parts of India. They took more recordings of the popular theatre artists Miss Gauhur Jan and the first of Miss Janki Bai of Allahabad, also considered important. Those of Mr Peara Saheb remained "good sellers" for some twenty-five years. They went on to Hong Kong, before ending the tour in Delhi and Bombay in 1907.

By 1906 The Gramophone Co. had achieved a dominant position in Asia, except that Victor and American Columbia were advancing control of China and Japan. So it was decided to build a factory at Sealdah (part of Calcutta), which began operating on 29th June 1908. By this, The Gramophone Co. gained two advantages over the competitors. Wax matrices and finished records had no longer to be sent each way across the world. Secondly, it was now true to stamp on the records "Made in India" which placated the political feeling now increasing. Later the Sealdah factory was to press records for Persia and Siam.

All these points are fully covered by Mr Kinnear who devotes a chapter to the indigenous Indian companies existing before and during the tenure of The Gramophone Co. at this period, of which we had no previous knowledge. A chapter headed "Bande Mataram" deals with politics that affected the recording industry in India, which is an unexpected revelation. But for the latter, the progress of The Gramophone Co. might have met more competition from local entrepreneurs.

The discography of 166 pages is in matrix order within each series, with label illustrations. The bibliography covers books and articles dealing with various aspects influencing recording in India, while a second

lists other personalities. The appendix gives names of manufacturers and suppliers of cylinders and discs in India from 1899 to 1915.

In his Foreword, Frank Andrews points out that although India has always had a major market for recordings, no comprehensive account has previously been published to show its position relative to the trade in the "western world". It was a major supplier of the 'lac' that was essential to make shellac discs, and that is perhaps all that many know about India's contribution. This book introduces us to the great trade in India that was rarely very far behind "the west". We anticipate the pleasure of seeing further instalments in the story (as well as the projected book by 'Kinnear and Andrews' on the rôle of Nicole).

This book is highly recommended to those interested in the history of recording generally as well as those specialising in India. It is an invaluable aid to collectors of Indian records and music. These early recordings contain among them old traditions now virtually disappeared.

This book (size 10½" x 6¼", 91 pages text and 166 pages discography) is published by **Popular Prakashan PVT. Ltd., 35c Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya Marg, Popular Press Building, Tardeo, Bombay 400034.**

**Ernie Bayly**

### **J-P Agnard Collection, Calendar 1996 (black and white plates)**

### **J-P Agnard Collection, Calendar 1997 (colour plates)**

Phonograph collectors who have had to pursue their interest and live their lives without the benefit of a calendar since the magnificent His Master's Voice Collection of 1988 will be glad to know that John-Paul Agnard from Québec has the matter in hand with two wall calendars he has made available for the current year and for 1997, showing photographs of cylinder machines from his own collection.

These calendars when folded measure about 11" x 8" and when opened to each month 11" x 16", there being an 11" x 7" photograph of a phonograph displayed. Also, instead of high-days and public holidays the calendars mark significant dates in the phonograph industry.

Many of the machines may be new to some collectors, being of French and German origin, and are strong on Lioret and Pathé, but Gramophones and Edison are represented, including Busy Bee and the unique French Gem.

Reproduction of the photographs is good but matt, and perhaps computer techniques will move so that in future they will be made glossy, though there is plenty of detail for identifying components. This is not a reservation however, these calendars are excellent over-all and will give endless pleasure, especially when finished with, as then 24 photographs will become available for the collection room wall.

These calendars **1996, US \$10** surface mail, post paid, and **1997, US \$15** surface mail, post paid are available from **John-Paul Agnard,** [redacted]

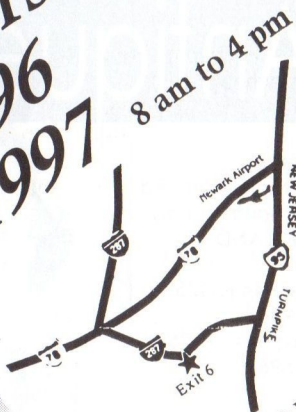
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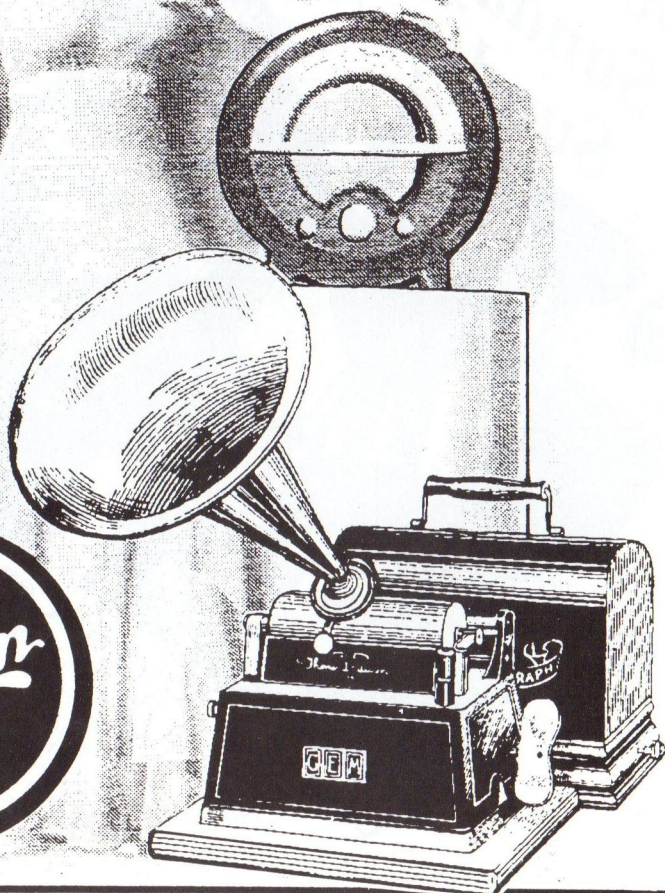
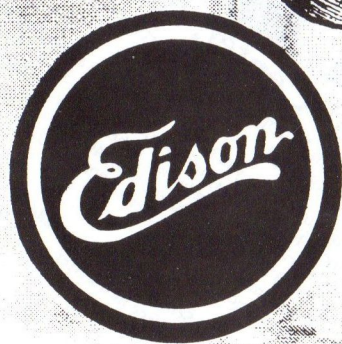
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An EMG Mk. 10 'Oversize' Gramophone, English,  
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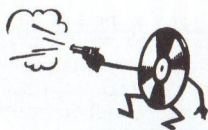
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## REVIEWS



**R. Strauss (arr. C. Krauss):** *Die Liebe der Danae* - Symphonic Fragments, *Der Rosenkavalier* - Suite;

**Weber:** Overture to *Der Freischütz*, Overture to *Euryanthe*;

**Verdi:** *La Traviata* - Preludes to Acts 1 & 3;

**Mozart:** Overture to *Le nozze di Figaro*;

**Wagner:** *Lohengrin* - Preludes to Acts 1 & 3;

Hallé Orchestra/ Sir John Barbirolli.

**The Barbirolli Society CDSJB1004 ('Barbirolli at the Opera'), 74:31, ADD mono, full price.**

Sir John Barbirolli's recording of Clemens Krauss' symphonic arrangement of fragments from *Die Liebe der Danae* was made in 1955. Krauss, Strauss' friend and collaborator, conducted the première of the opera at the Salzburg Festival in 1952: a recording is now available on Orfeo. Barbirolli's performance of this arrangement is both striking and powerful. From the outset, the thick orchestration is given a transparent reading. The pacing of Strauss' long melodic line is sensitively handled by Barbirolli, a conductor not generally associated with late Strauss.

The Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier* includes: *Prelude to Act 1; the Scene of the Presentation of the Rose; the Arrival of Baron Ochs and the Waltz from Act 2; the Trio from Act 3; and, finally, the Waltz from Act 3.* The opening bars of the *Prelude to Act 1* are well played by the Hallé horns. Barbirolli's understanding of Strauss' phrasing is confirmed by his treatment of the dynamics between Figs. 2 and 5, where he brings out the upper strings' crescendi. His preparation of Fig. 8, *viel ruhiger*, is particularly sensitive, shading the music with appropriate rubato. The scene of the presentation of the rose is well shaped and the execution of the 'hairpin' accents (from Fig. 20 in the upper strings) is handled with flair. Equally, his treatment of the semi-staccato writing in the bars

that follow Fig. 25 is suitably naïve. The waltz from Act 2 is cleanly played and the pacing of the rubato is musically executed. The link between the music from Act 2 and the famous Act 3 trio, however, is not convincing. Further, the balance in the trio, between Figs. 284 and 285, is not in accord with the score: no distinction is made between the trumpet's dynamic and that of the strings. However, the pacing of the line from Fig. 290 is excellent, and Barbirolli's treatment of the accents at Fig. 291 is in line with the printed score. The Suite concludes with the waltz from Act 3; one wonders whether its inclusion at this point was advisable. As the earlier excerpts occur in the order that they appear in the score, the use of the waltz at this juncture disturbs the natural direction of the music.

Barbirolli's energetic recording of the overture to *Der Freischütz*, made in 1951, captures the spirit of this early Romantic work. The first eight bars are skilfully shaped and the balance between the horns and the strings, from bar 10, is handled musically. From bar 27, Barbirolli adopts a literalist stance, observing Weber's dynamic shading. His reading is in line with Richard Wagner's writings on this passage. From the *Molto vivace*, the music's overall character changes. Barbirolli uses Weber's dynamics and phrasing to capture the restless nature of the music. However, between bars 92 and 95, where Weber marks *ff* followed by *fz*, Barbirolli appears to reduce the dynamic; as a result, the impact is lost. The clarinet solo from bar 96 is less than satisfactory; the quality of the clarinet playing throughout is well below the standard of the string playing.

The recording of the overture to *Euryanthe* was made at the Houldsworth Hall in 1946. As in the overture to *Der Freischütz*, Barbirolli emphasises phrasing and articulation. By highlighting the 'hairpin' accents in the winds in the opening bars, Barbirolli underlines Weber's characteristic orchestration. However, some of the string writing is lost in the hall's acoustics. For example, in bars 30 and 31, where the violins are playing on the G-string, the melodic line is masked by the accompanying material. The use of a 'meno mosso' at the second subject is both interesting and appropriate; Barbirolli's manipulations are, again, in line with Wagner's ideas. At the *Largo*, bars 129 to 143, the eight solo violins, playing 'con sordini', shape the phrases in a musical manner; however, the acoustics of the hall detract from the overall effect.



The Preludes to Acts 1 and 3 from *La Traviata* were recorded at the Free Trade Hall in 1954. Barbirolli regularly programmed these Preludes and this recording reflects the mutual understanding that existed between him and the orchestra. The opening of the Prelude to Act 1 is well balanced with a fine sense of line. From Fig. 2, one is aware of Barbirolli's outstanding gift as an orchestral conductor. Here, he balances the orchestra on three levels: first, the clarinets, bassoons and celli, who have the main melodic idea; secondly, the first violins with their counter melody; and, thirdly, the rest of the strings, whose function is to accompany. The dynamic given to each of these groups is weighted according to melodic importance. In the Prelude to Act 3, Barbirolli manipulates the music in a similar manner. For example, between bars 15 and 17, he uses bowing, along with the marked articulation, to accentuate the shape of the phrase.

The overture to *Le nozze di Figaro* is given a straightforward reading by Barbirolli. He recorded the work in 1949 at Studio One, Abbey Road. As in some of the other works found on this CD, the quality of the wind playing is less good than that of the strings. For example, between bars 8 and 11 and, later, between bars 25 and 28, the wind sound is weak and lacks colour. Barbirolli makes no tempo adjustment at the second subject; however, the manner by which he realizes the printed dynamic and the way that he balances the winds and the strings is of interest. At the second subject's first theme (bar 59), he plays the 'forte piani' as if they were sforzandi; while, at the second subject's second theme, he balances the orchestra in favour of the strings, reducing the importance of the first bassoon's melodic rôle. Between bars 260 and 263 and, again, between bars 274 and 277, Barbirolli makes a 'poco accelerando'. Within the context of his reading as a whole, this tempo manipulation seems unjustified.

Like the Preludes from *La Traviata*, the Preludes to Acts 1 and 3 from *Lohengrin* were regularly included in Barbirolli's concert programmes. The performances heard on this CD were recorded in 1946 at the Houldsworth Hall. From the beginning of the first Prelude, one is aware of the hall's poor acoustics and the ambient studio noise. These acoustic problems are particularly evident from bar 5, where the balance between the main melodic idea and the accompanying material is blurred. This said, the

spacing of the Prelude is good and the climax at the fortissimo is well judged. The Prelude to Act 3 suffers from the same problems. The sound is muffled and, as a consequence, the orchestral brilliance that one generally associates with this piece is missing.

**Brahms: Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98†; Concerto for violin, cello & orchestra in A minor, Op. 102†; The Dresden State Orchestra/Karl Böhm†; Jacques Thibaud (violin), Pau Casals (cello), The Pau Casals Orchestra, Barcelona/Alfred Cortot†.**

**Dutton Essential Archive CDEA 5006, 70:56, ADD mono, mid price.**

This recording of Brahms' Symphony No. 4 was part of a set of five symphonies that were made to mark the recording début of the Dresden Staatskapelle (State Orchestra). According to the sleeve notes, the orchestra's Music Director, Karl Böhm, realised that the orchestra's home, the Semperoper Dresden, was an ideal recording venue. This disc, recorded at the Semperoper, seems to verify Böhm's confidence. The original recording was made in June 1939 by HMV. Böhm's reading of this symphony is both considered and virtuosic. His treatment of the first movement's opening bars is one of elegance. The overall tempo of the first movement is  $\text{♩}=72$ . Böhm's manipulation of this speed is central to his reading of the movement as a whole. He makes no 'meno mosso' at the second subject and his only substantial reduction in speed occurs in the passage before the recapitulation. Further, he shapes his rubati by sitting on either the front or back edges of the main tempo. However, from bar 394, he gradually increases the tempo to  $\text{♩}=80$ . The Andante moderato is taken at a steady pace. For Böhm, the key word in this movement's superscription is 'moderato': his tempo is  $\text{♩}=60-63$ . As in the first movement, Böhm has a structured approach to tempo, underlining the architectonics of the movement. At bar 30, he begins to move the music forward; his destination is bar 36. Here, he adopts a new tempo,  $\text{♩}=69$ ; he returns to the 'tempo primo' at bar 40. The strings' pizzicati, between bars 5 and 29, are well executed; this, along with their controlled use of vibrato, is the mark of a first-class string section. Böhm's fiery reading of the third movement, Allegro giocoso, leaves the listener in no doubt as to the orchestra's virtuosity. The orchestra's



rhythmic attack and Böhm's sense of forward motion act as a foil to their reading of the Andante moderato. The orchestra's rendering of the last movement, *Allegro energico e passionato*, is, again, an example of orchestral virtuosity. As in the slow movement, Böhm's understanding of the superscription is central. For him, the two most important words in the superscription are 'energico' and 'passionato'. One feels that Böhm, when beginning the last movement, had the final bar in sight. He moves through each of the variations with a sense of direction; this is a well-structured reading.

For some, the appearance of Alfred Cortot, as the conductor for this performance of Brahms' Double Concerto, may come as a surprise. To most listeners he is primarily known as a pianist. However, he worked as an assistant conductor at Bayreuth under Felix Mottl and Hans Richter and gave the first French performances of *Götterdämmerung* and *Tristan und Isolde*. Cortot, Thibaud and Casals were friends and colleagues; the mutual understanding that developed as a result of these relationships seems to have been of benefit when they came to record this concerto. The performance was recorded in May 1929 in Barcelona. Cortot's work with the orchestra is impressive. The phrasing and attack that he draws from the string players are excellent. Equally, Casals' phrasing is a lesson in legato and line; this is evident in bar 8. Conversely, Thibaud is less impressive at his first entry and has difficulty playing the quadruple-stopped chords in tune (bar 56). This, however, is a minor consideration; overall, his playing is a study in elegance. The Andante is taken at a broad tempo: ♩=60. However, within this speed, both the soloists and the conductor colour the direction of the music with carefully structured and well-considered rubato. One of the most distressing features of this movement, and the recording as a whole, is the quality of the wind playing. For example, bar 2 of the slow movement is badly out of tune. Between bars 63 and 66, Cortot appears to strengthen the existing orchestration: the bassoons are doubled by the horns, and the flutes are doubled by the clarinets. This technique was not uncommon during the late nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth centuries; therefore, one should not be unduly surprised by Cortot's adjustments. The last movement, *Vivace non troppo*, is taken at a steady tempo: ♩=84. This speed is maintained throughout the movement, with the exception of the Poco meno Allegro, where the performers

reduce their speed to ♩=76. The main tempo of the movement allows the soloists and the orchestra to exploit the printed phrasing and articulation. This is a distinguished performance.

The remastering of both discs considered in this review was undertaken by Michael Dutton; the sound is clean and full-bodied. However, as all the recordings were taken from EMI's back-list, one wonders why the Barbirolli disc was issued at full price, while the Brahms disc is at mid price. Both CDs can be highly recommended and are available from most good classical record shops.

**Raymond Holden**

**Great Singers in Moscow,  
Nimbus CD NI 7876**

**Harold Bauer and Percy Grainger:  
Schumann, Nimbus CD NI 8804**

**Ignaz Friedman: Liszt and Chopin,  
Nimbus CD NI 8805**

These new CDs just released by Nimbus will cater for lovers of fine singing and fine piano playing.

It was early last year in these columns that I reviewed the Nimbus CD *Great Singers at the Mariinsky Theatre* (*Hillandale News* No.202, February 1995, pp 236-7). Now I am pleased to say that a further CD of material from the same source has been released. As with the last issue, this latest disc entitled *Great Singers in Moscow* has been produced using original records from the St.Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music.

The notes accompanying the new release explain that following the Mariinsky CD it had been intended to prepare a companion disc devoted to singers at the Bolshoi Theatre. But closer examination of the careers of many fine singers, showed that they would have been excluded from the disc because, although they were working mainly in Moscow, they did not appear at the Bolshoi.

Other venues included various independent or private opera houses, as well as the city's Conservatoire, the Hermitage and several so-called People's Palaces.



Like the Mariinsky issue this disc includes a number of items by artistes whose recordings are super-rarities: Nikolay Figner for example. He was well past his prime when he finally came to make his recordings and it has become fashionable to dismiss him as just another "bleating" Russian tenor, little known in the West. But I can honestly say that the transfer of the aria *Forgive me heavenly being* from Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades (Pique Dame)* is the best reproduction I have ever heard of a Figner recording. And when it is realised that it is taken from a 1901 Berliner, then the reproduction is even more amazing and it enables one to hear at least some of the voice which enchanted the Russian cognoscenti in the last years of the 19th century.

If - like me - you browse through record lists marvelling at the astronomical prices commanded by some records, then just imagine what a pile of Berliners, G&Ts and other originals by the following would fetch: Figner, Kastorsky, Nezhdanova, Zbruyeva, Yuzhin and Yemolenko-Yuzhina and Sobinov! And those are only some of the artistes featured on this CD. I checked through a catalogue and could not find one original listed at less than £50 and most were well into three figures. But thanks to this CD it is possible at last to hear some of the legendary voices of pre-Revolution Russia without having to re-mortgage your home or sell your family into white slavery to afford these records!

But apart from star names, there are others who were better known in their own time and in their own country; the excellent baritone Nikolay Shevelov for example singing *Epithalamium* from Rubinstein's *Nero* and Vera Petrova-Zvantseva with *Stride la vampa* from Verdi's *Il Trovatore*.

But it has to be admitted that it is the big names that shine: Kastorsky's *Farlaf's Rondo* from Glinka's *Ruslan and Lyudmila* - strongly reminiscent of the *Largo al Factotum*, is a text-book example of breath control and, is that an F that he hits right at the end? Not bad for a bass! Zbruyeva's two sides of *Vanya's aria* from another Glinka opera *A Life for the Tsar* have been stitched together to produce an unbroken eight minutes and forty-four seconds of magnificent contralto singing. Nezhdanova, as always, never fails to please and her 1910 recording of *Schücket euch mit Rosen* from Goldmark's little-performed opera *Ein Wintermärchen*, will delight many a listener.

A number of the singers on this new disc appeared on the Mariinsky CD - Yuzhin, Sobinov, Smirnov, Nezhdanova etc., but there is a good range of performances new to Nimbus: Shevelov, Slvotsov and Damayev among others.

The disc is accompanied by a well-researched, well-illustrated and detailed booklet, which reveals just how busy the Russian recording studios were in the years before the First World War. Just look at some of the dates and then the matrix numbers and imagine all the other material which - with any luck - is still on the shelves of the St.Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music just waiting for those nice people from Nimbus to transfer to CD!

It is really very difficult to see how this CD could have been bettered. There is a good range of material across the Russian and mainstream Western operatic repertoires; the transfers using the same process as in previous *Prima Voce* issues are excellent; the accompanying notes are good; and at 75 minutes 33 seconds of playing time the disc represents excellent value. If you share my taste in pre-First World War opera recordings with a special interest in the exotic world of Russian performers, then this CD is a **must** for your collection.

So that's the *Great Singers in Moscow* CD from the Nimbus *Prima Voce* series, number **NI 7876**. It is available from all good classical record shops at mid-price.

From legendary singers to legendary pianists and there have been two more issues in the Nimbus *Grand Piano* series. Last year the company brought out the first three CDs featuring performers who made Duo-Art piano rolls for the Aeolian Company. The first disc, *The Grand Piano Era* was effectively a sampler which featured - among others - Busoni, Grainger, Hofmann and Paderewski. The second and third discs were issued at the same time; the second featured Polish virtuosi and the third was a disc of Chopin rolls by Hofmann.

Now the *Grand Piano* series has progressed to other leading lights with Harold Bauer and Percy Grainger playing Schumann and Ignaz Friedman performing Liszt and Chopin. To my ear - unpractised as far as piano music is concerned - these sound like excellent recordings. However, if in doubt, ask someone who knows. So I took the precaution of seeking expert advice from a friend, Harry Hunter. Harry is not only a brilliant pianist and organist, with a

particular interest in the life and work of Vladimir Horowitz, but also has amassed a collection of sound recordings of many of the pianists featured on the Nimbus CD. He has listened critically to a number of the tracks issued on the *Grand Piano* series and assures me that as far as technique is concerned the rolls compare very favourably with the original sound recordings. The sound of course - unlike shellac originals - is the latest, crystal clear and digital.

However, Harry tells me that the tempi in one or two of the virtuoso pieces are suspiciously fast and he wonders if perhaps the engineers at the original roll-cutting session "enhanced" the virtuosity of the performer. Of course, if a gramophone record is played too fast, it not only speeds up the performance but also raises the musical pitch. But on a piano roll, where a series of perforations passes over a tracker bar, a change of roll speed will not affect pitch, only tempo. There have for many years been suspicions that, for example, Saint-Saëns' piano roll of *Rhapsodie d'Auvergne* had been "doctored" by being cut at a slower speed than normal so that

it would sound fast when replayed at the correct speed. The company in that case was not Aeolian, but the rival Welte-Mignon firm.

Nimbus of course would have nothing to gain from such subterfuge, but was there any tampering in Aeolian Hall all those years ago with any of these Duo-Art rolls...and would the performers have complained if perhaps their playing did appear just a little more electrifying than usual? I wonder...?

However despite that reservation about one or two of the tracks, I am happy to report that my musical friend Harry is impressed with the scope and repertoire of the *Grand Piano* series so far.

So the latest two CDs in the *Grand Piano* series are: *Harold Bauer and Percy Grainger playing Schumann* on **NI 8804** and *Ignaz Friedman playing Liszt and Chopin* on **NI 8805**.

**Colin Johnson**

(with a little help from Harry Hunter)

## C.L.P.G.S. BOOKLIST

### Additions

- CL 29 Reprint of the instruction leaflet for the *Audio-Phonic Home Recorder* - a device from the late 1940s early 1950s. **£1 including postage.**

Due to increased demand further supplies of the three Diamond Cut CDs of Edison Lateral Records: *Unreleased Edison Laterals 1* (reviewed in issue 189, December 1992), *The California Ramblers - Edison Laterals 2* (reviewed in issue 200, October 1994) and *Edison Laterals 3: Hot Dance of the Roaring 20s* (reviewed in issue 207, December 1995) have been ordered. These are available from the Booklist at **£13 each plus postage.**

A CD called *Swinging Down The Lane* with the Isham Jones Orchestra will soon be in stock. This will be reviewed in the August 1996 *Hillandale News*. The price for this will also be **£13 plus postage.**

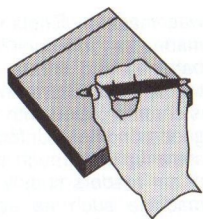
**C.L.P.G.S. Booklist,**

c/o George Woolford, [REDACTED]  
Nottingham NG5 4NA, Tel: [REDACTED]

<b>Postage U.K.</b>	Items with a total value of £5 or less	<b>add 50p</b>
	Items over £5 value up to & including £10	<b>add £1.00</b>
	Items with a total value over £10	<b>add 10%</b>
<b>Postage Overseas</b>	<b>Add 15% of the total price unless 15% of the total order is less than £1, then a minimum p&amp;p charge of £1 applies.</b>	



# LETTERS



## Marx 'n' Answers

Dear Chris,  
It was pleasing to see the response to my article in February's Hillandale News on the Marx Toy Gramophone.

To answer Rolf Rekda's letter, yes his is a Marx. Identical to mine in fact. He is correct in saying there are no identifying marks (no pun intended) on it to show its origin.

Tony Voysey's letter got me thinking. Yes, he is right, the series of Goldentone records was lengthened by six Beattle Beat records. I had completely forgotten about them even though I did have these too as a child. Goldentones were 2s 6d originally, by the way, or at least when I used to collect them. Gala also issued a few 7" 45 rpm extended play records called '3 in One'. They had three tracks on each side and were pressed in black plastic with yellow labels. These incorporated some of the GG1-48 catalogue. Both these and the Goldentones suffered from poor labels - merely stuck on rather than pressed into the records. Like Tony, my first real gramophone was a portable which cost me 30 shillings in 1965 or so. I used to take it to junior school to play at playtimes. I must have been a popular boy!!! I wonder what the Marx cost new in the early 1960s?

The Magic Record player I mentioned, was a brightly coloured machine approximately 15" by 12" in size. The record is turned manually by inserting a pencil type object through a hold at the side of the record's label. The arm is held in the lid of the machine which plays the record when closed. It dates presumably from the late 1950s.

Thanks go to Paul Hebden and to Ruth Lambert for the information on the Magic machine.

Yours sincerely,  
Dave Cooper, Blackpool

## Marx Toy Gramophones

Dear Mr Hamilton,

With regard to Dave Cooper's article in issue 200 on Marx Toy Gramophones, the details of a record that I have may interest him.

It is a 6" black vinyl 78 called *My Record*. The label is red with yellow rings round the edge and black text, but my record is in yellow letters.

On the label is p.1974 which makes it the latest 78 in my collection, if that is the recording date. Also on the label is Made in England distributed by Louis Marx & Co. Limited. It is complete in its own sleeve which states "Top quality records for use on 'My Record Player' or any gramophone."

Both the label and the sleeve have the words Marx Toys. The details of the recordings are as follows:

1715-1 *The Chestnut Tree* (J. Kennedy/  
Connor/H. Kennedy)

1716-1 *On Ilkley Moor baht 'at*

both sides are sung by Mike and His Friends.

The name Peter Maurice can be found underneath the matrix 1715 on the label at 9 o'clock.

Yours sincerely,  
William A. Mayers, Wigan, Lancashire

## Henry Wood

Dear Mr Hamilton,  
Following Jonathan Dobson's discovery of early recordings of Henry and Olga Wood in the Royal Academy of Music, described in *Hillandale News* No.187 of August 1992, I am able to report another, contemporary disc of Henry Wood as conductor, which came to light in a local antique shop last October.

The record in question is Gramophone Monarch 04042 (a) *When Evening Twilight*, (b) *In the Merry Spring*, sung by the Sheffield Festival Quartet, conducted by Mr Henry Wood. The matrix number is 2848f. Neither Jonathan Dobson's discography in *Hillandale News* No.188, October 1992 nor the one in Arthur Jacob's recent biography *Henry J. Wood: Maker of the Proms* (Methuen, 1994. ISBN 0-413-68390-7) includes it, although it would appear between Session 2 (4/2/09) and Session 3 (4/6/09) in the former.

I contacted Alan Kelly, who with the help of the EMI Archive, told me that the Gramophone Company Ltd.'s Register and Weekly Return of

Records Made covering this session have survived, but only list the Sheffield Quartet, with no mention of Wood. Once the text of the label had been settled, other papers were destroyed, so it seems that in this case the only reference to the conductor was on the label, and possibly in catalogues of the time, although the record was no longer available by 1911.

Henry Wood conducted at the Sheffield Festival from 1902 and in his autobiography *My Life of Music* mentions bringing the Sheffield Amateur Musical Society to London in 1909, at which time they presumably made this record. Jacobs' biography includes an advertisement, unfortunately dated only as 'pre-1912', entitled *What Mr Henry Wood says of the Gramophone* in which he is quoted as having said, in a speech to the Sheffield Festival Chorus "Have you all got a Gramophone? If not, get one at once..." It is not known who the quartet on 04042 were, though I think it unlikely that Olga was among them.

Yours sincerely,  
Paul Cleary, Wetherby, West Yorkshire

## Help Please!

Dear Chris,

I am seeking assistance in listing all Vocalion records and would like to inspect catalogues and details of records issued by this company.

I am particularly interested in those recordings made by York Bowen c.1925/6 onwards. If any of your readers have information I would be happy to hear from them and would appreciate any help they are able to give me.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Smith, [REDACTED]  
Gillingham, Kent ME8 0HG

Dear Editor,

I received my first copy of *Hillandale News* and am glad I have joined your group. The article on The Marx Toy Gramophone was of great interest.

A friend of mine has a Wondergram, serial number B 5631. There is an embossed circle on the top. On the top of this circle there is a bird. Maybe it is an eagle? I think the maker was Baird. World-wide patents are applied for and it

was made in England. Was a special battery made for this unit? We tried four type C batteries and it ran okay. There appear to be two speeds 45rpm and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  rpm. The machine is chrome-plated with a plain brown case. It is in good condition. Unfortunately we are unable to come up with much information on it. Can any of our readers supply me any details about this machine such as selling price and dates of production.

I am a member of the Canadian Antique Phonograph Society and have helped in writing articles on gramophones.

Yours truly,  
James Peck, [REDACTED] Alberta  
T5M 0N5, Canada

## Cliftophone Portable

Dear Chris,

Scouring around an antique fair recently, my eye caught sight of the ubiquitous black portable in the now familiar tatty state. Even from a distance something said that it was different. Closer inspection revealed it to have a horizontal soundbox on a tone arm mounted across the front of the motorboard. Now that's different thought I, and so I purchased a Cliftophone with a broken spring, but otherwise, on the face of it, a complete and original machine.

Turning to *Hillandale News* for information, I was disappointed that the only article I could trace was that in issue No.5, August 1969 concerning a hybrid table model Academy/Cliftophone. Surely I can't be the only member with one of these?

Christopher Proudfoot's book *Collecting Phonographs and Gramophones* (a near mint copy with dust jacket bought at a fair a year ago) gives the Cliftophone background. The single-spring motor is stamped 'made in France'. Proudfoot says the sales agents for all Cliftophones were Chappells, but mine has a Harrod's Ltd. plate affixed.

Now to the soundbox. Although there are four screws to undo to remove the front plate, I failed to do so as the diaphragm gaskets had deteriorated to such an extent that they have now firmly glued themselves in situ. Peering through the small holes in the plate, they do not look like rubber, and indeed may not be gaskets as such. The diaphragm and gaskets may be



one moulding in a bronze celluloid-type material. There is no patent information, but in view of the unusual nature of the design and materials, I would have thought a patent would at least have been attempted. If someone has this information and could let me have a photocopy, I would then know if the diaphragm/gaskets can be disassembled and also I would be able to enlarge this letter with photo/drawings as an article for *Hillandale News*.

Best wishes,

John Taylor, Staines, Middlesex

(Chappell and Co. were the wholesalers of Cliftophone gramophone and Brunswick Cliftophone records. My Cliftophone portable has a Methven Simpson, Perth retailers plate affixed to it. Methven Simpson were a large Scottish-based retailer with branches in several of the major towns in Scotland. I've never had to try and disassemble my soundbox so am unable to answer your queries on it, but I'm sure that some of our readers will be able to help you. Ed.)

## Vertical-cut Discs

Dear Mr Hamilton,

I think I can make a few additions to Paul Collenette's interesting list of vertical-cut records in *Hillandale News* 208. Vertical-cut Cylinders and Discs (Girard and Barnes) mentions the following:

Regal Records USA 1917 (page 24)  
Olympic Discs USA 1918 (page 158)  
Keen-O-Phone USA 1913 (page 164)

My own collection includes Sonora Sapphire Record 5012.5015, USA, black label with gold print and picture of three musical cherubs. Vintage is uncertain, but probably pre-1914.

Yours sincerely,

Don Taylor, Tasmania, Australia

## Bombay Specials and Crapophones

Dear Chris,

I was very interested to see references to the "Bombay Special" and "Crapophone" machines in April's *Hillandale News*. A few years ago, on a trip to India, I too spotted a large number of these fakes. I even found a cul-de-sac in Bombay where they were several shops, and around a dozen artisans, busy assembling these 'collectors' items'. From what I could see the cases, tone arms, horns and soundboxes were all new, whereas the motors were all

recycled - most worn out as Mr Priestley suggested. Nearly all of these Bombay Specials were being finished off with a poor copy of an HMV transfer.

Unfortunately there is a real market for these machines, and not just here in the U.K. I saw a number being sold to unsuspecting tourists in India. Certainly as collectors we should be concerned about their existence.

It seems to me that the most effective means of reducing their appeal is to deprive them of their apparent pedigree. The use of the HMV trademark is clearly illegal. I gather that a successful prosecution of a dealer (under Trading Standards legislation) has already taken place, in Bradford, on the instigation of EMI Music Ltd. However the real culprits are of course the importers - and the untouchable manufacturers. Perhaps EMI will be able to tackle the former soon, so that these fakes are exposed for what they really are.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Stephenson, Highgate, London

(It is up to us to report any purveyor of these machines to the relevant authorities and EMI Music Ltd. and hope that these organisations will be able to pursue successful legal action against the miscreants. Ed.)

Dear Mr Hamilton,

I should just like to write in support of my fellow restorer Ken Priestley who wrote about 'Crapophones' and 'Bombay Specials' in the last issue of *Hillandale News*.

I am myself becoming tired of seeing and being asked to repair reproduction horn gramophones. I meet more and more people who have been swindled out of hundreds of pounds (I have heard sums of high as £700, on what is basically a load of rubbish). I wholeheartedly support any action the Society takes to stop this practice.

Whilst on this subject, may I mention that Ken Priestley runs a first class business, both restoring and selling gramophones and providing an invaluable parts service at fair prices, to collectors and restorers like myself. He is always helpful and is, in my opinion, one of the most reliable people in the business. He trades under the name Holmfirth Antiques and I have no hesitation in recommending it.

Yours sincerely,

David J. Barker, Middleton, Manchester

## Magic Gramophone and Records

Dear Chris,  
Reading Tony Voysey's letter regarding toy gramophones in the April 1996 issue of *Hilldale News* and looking again at Dave Cooper's original which initiated it, I realised I was the proud owner of the Magic Gramophone and record in question.

It was manufactured by Rafael Tuck by arrangement with the Barker Book and Toy Co., a division of the Barker Greeting Card Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Judging by a Provisional Patent Application number it appears to date from about 1954 and was contained in a brightly coloured box, about 9" x 14".

The illustration on the record, and on the box lid, shows exactly the set-up. What it doesn't make plain however is how difficult it is to turn the record. This lies on the bottom of the box with a 3½" square of plastic film round the spindle, presumably to protect the cardboard from being worn by the pencil which was the suggested means of rotating the disc.

After starting, keeping the record turning at an even, approximately constant speed, is not easy and another problem which is glossed over in the sketch, is keeping the needle on the record, especially at the start. This is due to the geometry of the 'soundbox' (card) and its support at the back being wrong, thus making the needle very liable to jump off or score across the track. My record has quite a few scores to prove it.

One good point though, the sound it makes is surprisingly loud and clear. However all the difficulties must have made it less user-friendly for a child and this together with having only one record (and not a very exciting one at that) explains perhaps why they are so rare today.

Yours sincerely,  
Leslie Gage, Edinburgh

## Edison Standard Model A

Dear Editor,  
For some years I have owned an Edison Standard Model A phonograph, dated, I believe, 1903-4. More recently I acquired a restored Edison recorder for it.

I have been able to make some good recordings onto Miller-Morris blank cylinders, using only the oversize 28" horn which came with the machine. However, the shaving attachment on the machine lacks a cutter.

Over the years, I have contacted both Mr Hodgson of The Expert Stylus Company and Mike Field, but judging only from brief telephone conversations, neither seem familiar with the fitting on this machine, although I have seen at least one other. Both expect that the cutting blade should be mounted on the shaft of the attachment, which should protrude through the frass collection box. This cannot be so on mine. I enclose a rough drawing showing the relevant parts in 'exploded' sectional view.

From this it can be seen that the shaft is shouldered so that it can pass into the boss of the frass box but no further. The aperture in the front of the box forms a narrow slit through which only frass could pass. The remains of fixing cement are present in the lower fold of the aperture, and if the blade was fixed there, it must have protruded forward almost perpendicular to the cylinder surface. As I recall from seeing another, its shape resembled a human incisor tooth.

I would very much like to restore this fitting to working order, and would appreciate comments on how it was intended to function, and where I might get a replacement blade made and correctly fitted.

Yours sincerely,  
Martyn Dowell,  
Southampton SO15 3FZ

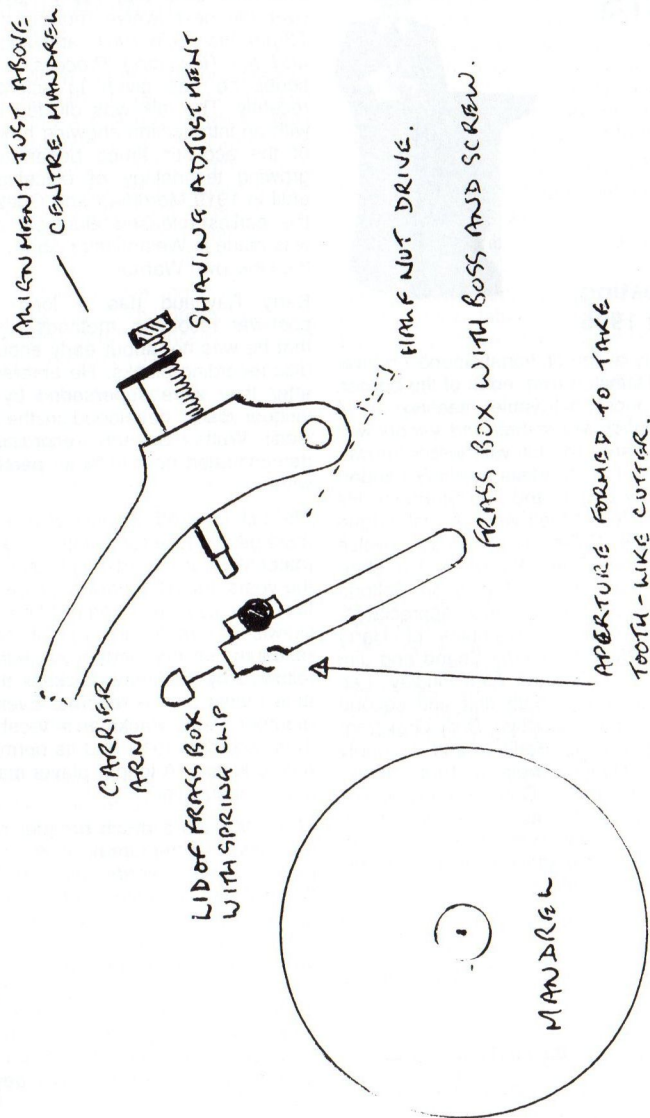
## KINGFISHER CASSETTES

**PETER DAWSON:** New cassette release of recently discovered radio performances & interviews from the 1940s & 1950s, containing *The Floral Dance/Trees/I Travel The Road/I'll Walk Beside You/Boots/Waiata Poi/Changing of the Guard/The Green Hills of Somerset/Lassetter's Last Ride* (two different broadcast versions)/*Tahini Tarakino/Mandalay* (full poem, runs nearly six minutes). Great Dawson anecdotes, including thoughts on Melba. With the exception of one song, all this material is released for the first time. Playing time: 60 minutes. **Price £10 or US\$20**, which includes packing and air mail delivery. Highly recommended for admirers of Peter Dawson. Write to **Kingfisher Cassettes, PO Box 1660, Port Macquarie, NSW, 2444, AUSTRALIA.**



# EDISON STANDARD MODEL A (c.1903)

SHAVING ARRANGEMENT.



NOT TO SCALE

Plumb.

## REPORTS



### London Meeting, March 21st 1996

The last Society at the National Sound Archive, brought Chris Hamilton from north of the border, to present a most enjoyable meeting. In *A Glimpse at Scottish Music Hall and Variety* well known artists shared the bill with lesser known. Chris talked about such artists as Harry Lauder, Will Fyffe, Jimmy Logan and Leo Stormont. He played us examples of their work. A real tongue twister from Dave Willis on Broadcast Twelve SC302 called *The Pickle Packer* and a short play from the Joe Corrie Players on Beltona 1783 called *Oor Jock* were much appreciated. Chris also let us hear examples of Harry Gordon, Robert Wilson, Jimmy Shand and Jim Cameron, Jock Lorimer and Alec Findlay. Leo Stormont had a turn in both first and second houses, firstly singing *Goodbye, Dolly Gray* from CD transfer of a 1902 Berliner and secondly singing *Bonnie Dundee* from a 1905 single-sided Beka Grand 6907. Chris is carrying out research into Leo Stormont and would be grateful if any member who has access to information on him especially in relation to his career and family would contact him.

All in all a very well-researched and presented programme.

### Soundbox

### London Meeting, April 16th 1996

Besides getting itself re-established in a newly-decorated and more comfortable Bloomsbury Centre, the London meeting has also moved to the third Tuesday of the month.

The first presentation was part one of three

illustrated talks that Barry Raynaud is giving over the next twelve months on *The Electric 78rpm Era 1926-1961*, and sub-titled *Records and the Recording Process*, adapted from a series he has given to scientific gatherings recently. The talk was divided into 9 sections with an introduction showing how the engineers of the acoustic times began to take on the growing technology of electrical amplification until in 1919 Merriman and Guest's work led to the earliest-released electrical recording. This was made in Westminster Abbey at the Burial of the Unknown Warrior.

Barry Raynaud has a long experience of post-war recording methods, though allowing that he was not about early enough for the 8lb. disc recording blanks. He entered the business after they were superseded by acetates and lacquer discs, developed in the late 1930s by Cecil Watts. Several recordings that Barry demonstrated he had been personally involved with.

The talk covered aspects of record making that most people take for granted, the many types of materials that records had been made of over the years, the all-important shape of the groove, the geometry and composition of the cutter, likewise the reproducing point, and the endless research for the perfect soundbox and horn, followed by the heavy pickups that forever left their marks on the records. Even our one-time member Percy Packman's V-cut on his Marathon record of 1913 had its permanent place in record history. A longer player maybe, but sadly a shorter survivor.

This talk used a much broader brush than just the History of the Gramophone that some of us have essayed years ago in other places. Graphs and formulae were included and discussed by the technically minded in the audience, and there were plenty of facts for the layman. We learnt that it used to take 150 tons to press a 10 inch record and 200 tons for a 12 inch, and the days were when Woolworth's could sell an Eclipse or a 9 inch Crown record for sixpence and everyone down the line made a profit, but a 10-incher was beyond reach at the price.

A most competent presentation and a good evening; our thanks, and here's to the next part later in the year.

### A London Correspondent



## Midlands Group Meeting, March 16th 1996

Chairman Eddie Dunn opened the proceedings with a tribute to our oldest supporter Gerry Lee (82) who sadly died a few days earlier. Gerry was a staunch supporter of our Group and rarely missed a meeting. His warmth, good singing voice and Irish wit will be sorely missed at our gatherings. Flowers were sent to the funeral by the Committee on behalf of the Group.

The programmes for the evening consisted of *Jazz in Britain* Parts 1 & 2. Phil Bennett gave us Part 1, which ranged from the inception of jazz in this country until the mid-1930s.

Phil explained that the first attempts to play in the jazz idiom in Britain were in fact by a small number of bands in London clubs, such as the Boston Jazz Band at Murray's Club. The first jazz recordings in the U.K. took place in January 1919 with the Murray Pilcer Jazz Band's offering of *That Morning Trombone* on Edison Bell Winner 3292. In April of the same year the American jazz recording pioneers The Original Dixieland Jazz band visited this country and things were never the same again.

We heard the above mentioned Murray Pilcer record and the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's version of *Alice Blue Gown* (12" Columbia) in waltz time. The latter is one of Phil's favourite records.

Home grown talent began to blossom with Jack Hylton joining the Queens Dance Orchestra in 1919 and eventually becoming its leader. We heard *Wang Wang Blues* which incidentally featured a coloured clarinettist (a rarity in those days). Phil progressed through the 1920s giving us musical examples of the changing styles. from 1921 to 1929 the Savoy Hotel in London employed two dance orchestras namely The Savoy Havana Band and The Savoy Orpheans. They were both capable of making some fine jazz-influenced records. Disagreements caused these bands to be discharged and the Savoy management appointed Fred Elizalde as its musical director, who formed a band that was virtually an advanced jazz band. This however proved too much for the more conservative British public and after a few months the band was forced to leave the Savoy. We heard a fine example of the style of Elizalde's orchestra in *Tiger Rag* on Brunswick 147 recorded in January 1928.

Phil continued to give us examples of jazz-orientated orchestras performing into the 1930s, where the musical sounds were becoming more sophisticated, and in his final offerings gave us Lew Stone's *White Jazz* from November 1933 and Ambrose and His Orchestra's rendering of *Cotton Pickers' Congregation* from 1937.

Part 2 of *Jazz in Britain* was presented by Ed Parker who set out to present us with highlights from the 1940s onwards.

A slice of history was cut when in November 1949 Ken and Bill Collyer's Crane River Jazz Band recorded *Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho* on the Ristic label. This was the first British band to embrace the authentic New Orleans sound. Ed next played *Ool-Ya-Koo*, a Decca recording by Alan Dean and his Be-Boppers. This was one of the earliest examples of the be-bop style recorded in Britain. Johnny Dankworth and Ronnie Scott were amongst the personnel of this band.

One interesting point made by Ed was that the early post-war 'trad' band players were for the most part amateurs whilst the 'modernists' mainly came from regular bands or were session men. Ed continued to play examples of various post-war jazz styles mainly because of their rarity, either in quality or quantity of numbers of records issued. For example the April 1949 *Weary Blues* by Humphrey Lyttelton on the London label only sold 200 copies; so here we had a real rarity.

Another unusual offering we heard was *St. Louis Blues* by the Happy Wanderers - an Esquire LP from March 1957. The band were actually London street buskers but were considered to be good enough to be put on record. We even heard street noises such as traffic on the records! Ed's programme ranged widely over the post-war jazz scene and he gave us a real variety of styles. His final record was of Steve Race's Bop Group playing *Microcosmo* from August 1949.

Both Phil and Ed put in a lot of hard work to produce these complementary programmes and they rightfully received warm applause from the meeting for their efforts.

**Geoff Howl**

## Northern Group Meeting, March 24th 1996

Our first meeting of the 1995/6 season was off on the right foot when we met at Sheffield on Sunday 24th March 1996. The programme consisted of two lectures.

The first, on *The Life and Recorded Music of Enrico Caruso*, should have been given by Gordon Biting our host, but due to a sudden loss of voice, the lecture was presented by Michael Burns (at extremely short notice) who also supplied the wooden-horned Monarch and pictures of the maestro, which adorned the lecture room. The mint copies of Caruso recordings were supplied by Gordon, and illustrated the mastery of the man through popular recordings, including *Questa o quella* of 1908, *For You Alone* from 1910 and the 1916 *O Sole Mio* (without the ice-cream cornet!).

The 1904 copy of *E lucevan le stelle* which was described as having piano accompaniment, turned out to be a later copy with orchestra, and was followed by the 1907 Melba/Caruso duet of *O soave fanciulla* from Puccini's *La Bohème*.

The final record was reputed to have led to his first season at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, and was one of the 1902 Milan recordings running at the extremely slow speed of 60rpm.

Michael Burns showed his considerable knowledge and love of his subject and delivered what can be described as a very interesting, amusing and informative talk, in a very professional manner. There were a number of the audience who said they could have enjoyed a continuation of it after the tea break.

The second lecture, *Jazz on Record*, was given by Derek Barker. His subject was of great contrast to the earlier talk, but was given with similar authority.

Derek's records covered the period from the late 1930s to the late 1950s with names such as Chris Barber, Fats Waller, Kid Ory, Lonnie Donegan, Humphrey Lyttelton and Louis Armstrong. Titles included *South*, *Whistling Rufus*, *Big Bitter and Egg Man*, *Rockin' Chair*, *Honky Tonk Train Blues*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Bad Penny Blues* and *Sugar Blues*.

Thinking that we were not to hear an acoustically recorded jazz record, a 7" disc was passed over from Duncan Miller and was played (as all the jazz records had been) on Gordon Biting's Gilbert Cabinet Gramophone. The distinctive feature of the Gilbert was its bugle shaped tone

arm. This acoustic disc was a new issue, being recorded in the traditional manner into the horn, was engineered and produced by Duncan. This completed a great jazz session. Thanks to all concerned.

Our next meeting will be a 'Portable Picnic', to be held on July 21st. The venue has not yet been fixed but a 'phone call to Ann or Miles Mallinson on [REDACTED] about two weeks before the event should reveal all.

It is hoped to have another 'Steamboat Picnic' on *Shamrock*, but if this is not possible then we shall use *Trough of Bowland*. It is advisable to make a positive booking for this event as space is limited. Telephone Ann or Miles for full details and booking.

**Ann Mallinson**

## **West of England Branch Meeting, March 23rd 1996**

Eric Whiteway's house in Exeter was the venue for our branch's second meeting and for the dozen or so people present it was a memorable evening.

We sat in Eric's spacious music room and were treated to a full programme of discs ranging from 1905 to 1958. They were all played on his EMG gramophone. We were enthralled by the wonderful quality of reproduction achieved with fibre needles and the 9-foot papier-mâché horn. Often it was hard to convince ourselves that Caruso or Battistini had not come back to entertain us personally such was the fidelity of the reproduction.

Eric's presentation lasted nearly two hours and he interspersed helpful comments about the artists between the recordings. Some 30 discs including Caruso's 1907 version of *Vesti la giubba* re-vitalised with a 1930s symphony orchestra, Chaliapin's *Song of the Volga Boatmen*, Gottlieb's Orchestra playing *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, Mischa Levitzky playing a vigorous *Hungarian Rhapsody* and, perhaps inevitably, Peter Dawson's *Glorious Devon*. It was also interesting to see how the EMG coped with a truly modern record, Perry Como singing *Catch a Falling Star* from 1958.

We all had a most pleasant evening and our thanks go to Eric for his programme and to his wife, Adrienne, for the hospitality.



The next meeting of the branch will be at Keith Catchpole's home in Totnes, Devon where we shall be treated to some of the highlights of his collection. All are most welcome, and it would be really nice to see folk from other parts of the country as well as our regulars. The event will take place on Saturday 8th June and more details can be obtained from myself on [REDACTED] or Keith on [REDACTED]

**Paul Morris**

### **C.L.P.G.S. MIDLANDS GROUP**

#### **Annual Phonofair and Record Collectors' Bazaar**

**Saturday 28th September 1996**

**10am to 4pm**

St. Matthews Church Hall  
East Park Way/Willenhall Road  
Wolverhampton

**ADMISSION ONLY £1.00**

**Stalls available call Geoff Howl on**  
[REDACTED]

## **FORTHCOMING MEETINGS IN LONDON**

The London Meetings are held in the **Parlour Room** at the **Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church Halls**, 235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EL at **7pm** on the **third Tuesday of the month**.

**June 18th**

Geoff Edwards on *Music of The Jazz Age 2*

**July 16th**

Ernie Bayly on *Music Hall*

**August 20th**

Ron Coppleston of the Plastics Society will talk on an aspect of using plastics in the record industry.

**September 17th**

Barry Raynaud continues *Sound Recording and Reproduction of the 78rpm Era (1927-1960)*

**October 15th**

Dominic Combe and George Glastris will be giving a programme of cylinders. - Full details later

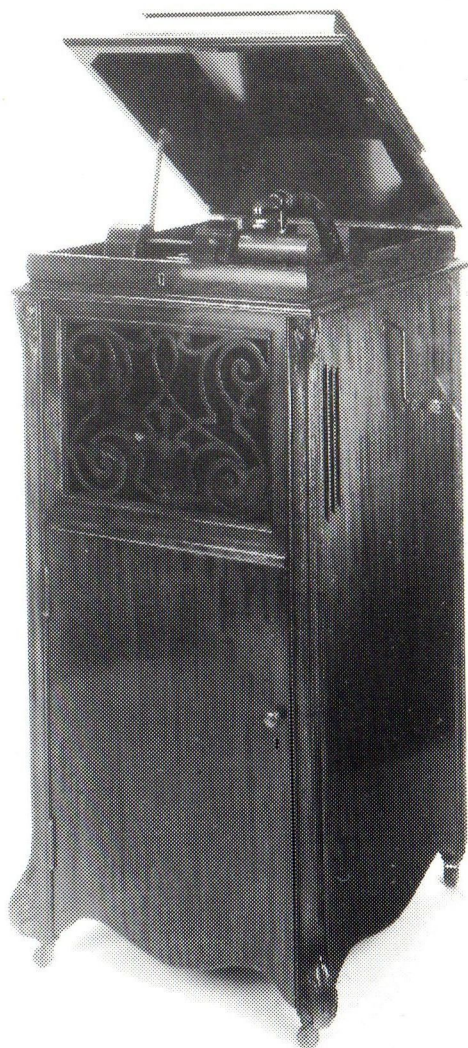
**November 19th**

To be announced

**December 17th**

Members Night - Bring your own selections

*An Edison  
Amberola I phonograph,  
Model A, 1910  
Fetched £2700  
in our sale on  
December 13th 1995*



## Mechanical Music

Auction: Wednesday July 31st 1996  
Enquiries: Christopher Proudfoot on [REDACTED]  
or George Glastris on [REDACTED]  
Catalogues: Julia Chinnery on [REDACTED] (sales)

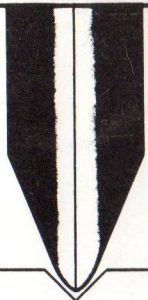
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